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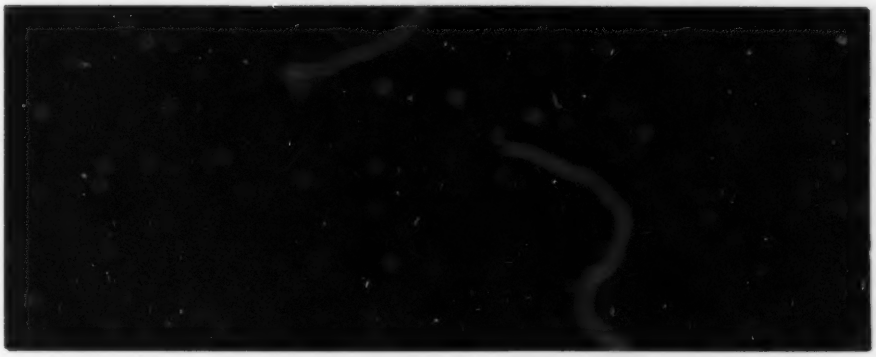

Keeping the agriculture and food industries competitive through Research, Development and Demonstration.

Final Report

2.1-8

Reproductive Efficiency in the Beef Herd

Funded by
The Agriculture Development Fund

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FINAL REPORT

PROJECT NAME: Reproductive Efficiency in the Beef Herd

PROJECT NUMBER: 2.1-8

OBJECTIVE: To increase the calving percentage by 5% in one year on selected farms and to shorten the calving period to 45 days.

DESIGN: Producers receptive to the concept of improving reproductive efficiency were identified by the ag. rep. or veterinarian. Herds were pregnancy tested in the falls of 1985 and 1986. Calving periods were recorded for the springs of 1986 and 1987. Feed tests were taken to determine the adequacy of the 1985-86 winter feeding program. Bulls were evaluated prior to the 1986 breeding season.

PROCEDURE: In the fall of 1985, 526 cows were pregnancy tested. There were 493 cows pregnant or a pregnancy rate of 94%. Feed tests and ration analysis indicated that all producers were feeding adequate rations. Bull evaluation assisted producers in identifying potential bull problems. The calving period in the spring of 1986 ranged from 63 days to 154 days with an average of 98 days. In the fall of 1986, 527 cows were pregnancy tested. There were 501 pregnant or a pregnancy rate of 95%. The calving period in the spring of 1987 ranged from 24 days to 158 days with an average of 102 days. For detailed results see attached tables.

CONCLUSIONS: While neither objective was met, there was some improvement in pregnancy rate. Pregnancy rate was higher on participating farms than expected making a 5% increase unreasonable. The 1% increase achieved resulted in 5 more calves produced, an average of 6 calf per farm or $300 per farm.
Calving period on the other hand appears to be much longer than anticipated. Calving period actually increased from an average of 98 days in 1986 to 102 days in 1987.

RECOMMENDATION: The pregnancy rate of 94% and 95% achieved in 1985 and 1986 respectively is very acceptable. On the contrary, an average calving period of 100 days is too long. A 45 day calving period is too ambitious and a 60 day period would be a more realistic target.

SUMMARY: Pregnancy testing and monitoring calving periods are useful ways to measure reproductive efficiency in the beef herd. Pregnancy tests conducted in 1985 and 1986 indicate an acceptable pregnancy level of 94% and 95% on participating farms. Calving periods on the contrary appear to be at an unacceptable level, 100 days in length. Livestock producers should concentrate their efforts on reducing calving periods to 60 days.

TABLE 1 - Pregnancy Rate

	1986	1987
Alex Morrow	93%	93%
Glen Ekert	88%	95%
Gary McMullen	94%	96%
Ralph McMullen	100%	100%
Brian McTavish	94%	94%
Ken Aldous	94%	97%
Bob Brolund	90%	89%
Doug Nelles	100%	------
Average	94%	95%

TABLE 11 - Calving Period

	1986	1987
Alex Morrow	154 days	106 days
Glen Ekert	104 days	158 days
Gary McMullen	121 days	91 days
Ralph McMullen	64 days	58 days
Brian McTavish	63 days	88 days
Ken Aldous	123 days	139 days
Bob Brolund	85 days	149 days
Doug Nelles	67 days	24 days
Average	98 days	102 days